

Assembly Bill 2443 / Nakanishi
A Bill to Promote Physician Wellness
Sponsored by the Medical Board of California

The Issue: Through their extensive education and training, physicians are seen as the preeminent healthcare providers of the modern world. But the wellness of the patient relies on the wellness of the practitioner, who often gives priority to those under his care before his own well-being and that of his family. The stresses of the job are created by a broad spectrum of factors yet can significantly impact the effectiveness of a physician.

The wellness of a person can be defined not only by the absence of disease and infirmity; a person's health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being.

During the last year, the Medical Board of California (Board) has been discussing the issue of physician wellness.

Current Law: Current law does not address the issue of physician wellness. However, since the mission of the board is to protect healthcare consumers, it must be recognized that this best can be achieved by having healthy physicians care for their patients

The Solution: During the past year, the Board has been discussing the issue of physician wellness. The focus of the review centered on the benefits that might be derived from the implementation of the program to assist with licensees' well-being. The Board believes that any action which promotes the prevention of physician "unwellness" is a worthwhile effort. Although board member and staff have realized this concept, the idea was formalized in the creation of a Wellness Committee in summer of 2007.

To further these goals, the Board is sponsoring AB 2443 legislation, which requires the board to establish a program to promote the well-being of medical students, postgraduate trainees, and licensed physicians and surgeons. The program should address and prevent illness and burnout due to stress, overworking, and professional dissatisfaction by including, among other things, an examination of wellness education.

Support: None yet

Opposition: None expected